

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

war. His action, he said, was not directed against the Soviet Union. Oil concessions were temporarily refused to all those who asked for them, including the Americans and the British. The Premier listed the following four reasons for the refusal: (a) the presence of foreign troops in Iran, (b) the uncertain economic situation due to the war, (c) the fact that some questions remained unsolved during the recent Anglo-American oil conference in Washington, and (d) advice from Iranian diplomatic representatives abroad not to grant concessions.²⁹

Finally the Premier declared that this decision was taken as a result of negotiations with the British and American companies before the arrival of Vice-Commissar Kavtaradze in Teheran.

Kavtaradze's appeal to the Iranian public through the "free press" of Iran did not remain unanswered. Suddenly reversing their recent attitude of opposing all grants to foreigners, the Tudeh and affiliated papers launched a vigorous campaign in favor of the Soviet oil concession. They accused the Iranian government of reaction, fascism, and hostility to Russia. They repeatedly emphasized the theme that after the war and the liquidation of Allied installations in Iran the resulting unemployment could be combated only by such measures as the development of natural resources in collaboration with the Soviets. They identified the interests of the Soviet Union with the welfare of Iranian workmen and unanimously insisted on an early resignation of Premier Sa'ed.³⁰ Moreover, the Tudeh organized mass demonstrations in the parliament square. A throng, reported by Tass as twenty thousand strong (in reality not exceeding four to five thousand), assembled before the Majlis and menacingly demanded

Sa'ed's dismissal. The revealing fact about this demonstration was that its participants were brought to the square in Soviet trucks and that Soviet Army detachments happened to march through the area at the very same time. The Iranian troops called to secure order were thus paralyzed, as any step taken against the demonstration could be interpreted as directly anti-Soviet. According to reports that were given general credence in Teheran each demonstrator was paid a day's wages by the Communist party for his participation. A wave

as *Journal de Tehran*, Oct. 30, 1944.
soRahbar, Oct. 26, 1944; *Zafar*, Oct. 27, 1944; *Razm*, Nov. 8, 1944; *Azadegan*, Nov. 18, 1944; *Azhir*, Nov. 26, 1944.